NO. 295 JAN.
30430 35¢

BATMAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

BACK OFF, *BATMAN*-- OR THIS *MAGIC SHOW* BECOMES A *TRAGIC SHOW!*

BAT MAN

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN A GUNMAN MURDERED HIS PARENTS, *BRUCE WAYNE* TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME. MASQUERADING BY DAY AS A MILLIONAIRE-MAN-ABOUT-TOWN, HE PROWLS THE NIGHT TO PREY ON THE VERMIN OF THE UNDERWORLD AS THE DREAD...

CREATED BY BOB KANE

DAVID HAMTON -- THE ANGRY *MAGICIAN*

GLENN FALKENSTEIN -- THE MYSTERIOUS *MENTALIST*

MARTIN MONROE -- THE AMBITIOUS *APPRENTICE*

LISA MORROW -- THE SULTRY *PSYCHIC*

WINSTON BENNETT -- THE TACITURN *MANAGER*

PERHAPS THE *DEADLIEST* CASE OF THE *DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE* AND THE LEAGUE OF *SLEUTHS* WHO CALL THEMSELVES *THE MYSTERY ANALYSTS OF GOTHAM CITY!*

EVEN HOUDINI *HIMSELF* COULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED *THIS* DEATHTRAP, *BATMAN!*

FOR INTERFERING WITH MY PLANS, I *CONDEMN* YOU--

--TO *DIE!!*

A WOMAN IS *DEAD*--AND ONE OF THESE PEOPLE *KILLED* HER!

BUT *WHO?*

ONLY *ONE MAN* KNOWS THE ANSWER-- AND HE'S ABOUT TO *DROWN!* SEE IF *YOU* CAN UNCOVER THE *SECRET* BEHIND--

"THE ADVENTURE OF THE HOUDINI WHODUNIT!"

GERRY CONWAY / WRITER * MICHAEL GOLDEN / ARTIST * JERRY SERPE / COLORIST * BEN ODA / LETTERER
JULIUS SCHWARTZ / EDITOR

BATMAN, Vol. 30, No. 295, January, 1979. Published monthly by DC COMICS INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © 1977 by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition, nor affixed to, nor as part of any advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

Advertising Representative, Sanford Schwarz & Co., Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, (212) 391-1400

SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: DC COMICS INC., 155 Allen Blvd., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737. Annual subscription rate $5.00. Outside U.S.A. $6.00

Jenette Kahn, Publisher
Joe Orlando, Managing Editor
Julius Schwartz, Editor
E. Nelson Bridwell, Associate Editor
Jack Adler, Vice-Pres.-Production
Vince Colletta, Art Director
Paul Levitz, Editorial Coordinator

Sol Harrison, President
Arthur Gutowitz, Treasurer

CHAPTER ONE: "... A RIDDLE..."

ODDLY ENOUGH, IT BEGINS HERE: OUTSIDE THE *GOTHAM CITY FEDERAL DEPOSITORY*, AT 9:02 P.M. OF A COLD TUESDAY EVENING...

WE GOT THE *CASH*-- WE'RE JUST ABOUT *HOME FREE!*

WITH THOSE *ALARM CIRCUITS* CUT, AIN'T *NO WAY* NO COP'S GONNA CATCH US TONIGHT!

MAN, WE ARE *WINNERS!*

WRONG-- *LOSERS!*

YOU'VE GOT *NOWHERE* TO GO--

POW

K-POWW

YUHHHH!

-- BUT *DOWN!*

OOOFF!

ARRRK

9:13 P.M. -- AND, AT THE END OF *ONE* CASE, THE FIRST GLIMMERINGS OF *ANOTHER*...

COMMISIONER GORDON, SHOWING UP AT A *MINOR* CRIME LIKE THIS? *BECKONING* ME...?

WHAT BRINGS *YOU* HERE, COMMISSIONER?

A *MURDER*-- PERHAPS *THREE!*

I JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM OUR OLD FRIENDS, THE *MYSTERY ANALYSTS!*

THEY'VE GOT A *PUZZLER* FOR US TO SOLVE!

EYES SUDDENLY TURN *COLD.* OF ALL CRIMES, THE *MASKED MANHUNTER* HATES *MURDER* MOST *INTENSELY.*

CAN I GIVE YOU A *LIFT*--?

MURDER MADE HIM *THE BATMAN*... AND IT'S A CRIME HE WILL FOREVER *AVENGE!*

I MAKE MY *OWN* TRANSPORTATION, COMMISSIONER!

9:28 P.M.--ON THE FOURTH FLOOR OF A STAID MIDTOWN *BROWNSTONE*, FIVE MEN AND A WOMAN RENEW A TRADITION SOME THOUGHT *FORGOTTEN*...

"*THE MYSTERY ANALYSTS OF GOTHAM CITY*"-- IT STILL HAS A NICE RING TO IT!

TOO BAD *HUGH RANKIN* COULDN'T BE HERE!

SEEMS ONE OF US IS *ALWAYS* OUT OF TOWN--OR BUSY ON ANOTHER CASE, MARTIN.

ART'S RIGHT! PERHAPS THAT'S WHY WE HAVEN'T HAD A MEETING IN SO LONG...

...BECAUSE OF *ABSENT FRIENDS!*

"ABSENT FRIENDS"! AND WHAT ABOUT THE FRIENDS WHO *ARE* HERE? HAVE WE REALLY *CHANGED* SO MUCH?

TRUE, *DANTON* HERE ISN'T *DISTRICT ATTORNEY* ANY MORE...

"...BUT *KAYE DAYE* IS STILL WRITING MYSTERY NOVELS AND WINNING *AWARDS*..."

"...*MARTIN TELLMAN* CONTINUES TO SOLVE CRIMES AS AN *ARM-CHAIR DETECTIVE*..."

"...AND *ART SADDOWS* STILL PRODUCES THE BEST *CRIME-INVESTIGATION* COLUMN IN ANY NEWSPAPER..."

BUT ALL THAT DOESN'T *MATTER* NOW--

THE COMMISSIONER SAID SOMETHING ABOUT--A *MURDER*...

...OR *THREE*--?

RIGHT! I'LL START WITH *MY* STORY, *BATMAN!* CHRONOLOGICALLY, IT WAS THE *FIRST* MURDER --IF IT *WAS* MURDER!

"--AND EARLIER THIS *EVENING*, AS I WAS LEAVING MY STORE-FRONT OFFICE--"

"--I WAS HORRIFIED TO DISCOVER--"

--A *DEAD* WOMAN--

--IN MY DOORWAY!

SORRY, WE'R CLO

LEGAL AID OFFICE
ENTRANCE NO. 90-C

SINCE LEAVING THE OFFICE OF *DISTRICT ATTORNEY*, I'VE WORKED AS A LEGAL AID COUNSELOR FOR THE *POOR*--

"NATURALLY, I CALLED THE *POLICE*, WHO ARRIVED WITH AN *AMBULANCE*..."

"THE MEDIC CONFIRMED *MY* OPINION-- THE WOMAN WAS DEAD, RECENTLY *KILLED!*"

"SHE WAS ABOUT TO BE PUT ABOARD THE AMBULANCE WHEN--"

YOU *KILLED* HER!

SHE'S *DEAD*--

AND YOU *KILLED* HER!

"THERE WAS A BRIEF *SCUFFLE*--APPARENTLY THE MAN WAS *HYSTERICAL*--"

"SOMEHOW HE MANAGED TO BREAK AWAY, FLEEING BEFORE THE POLICE COULD *CATCH* HIM."

"I'M *CONVINCED* THIS MAN WAS THE *MURDERER*, *BATMAN!*"

"NOW COMES THE *ODD* PART--AFTER THE SCUFFLE, THE AMBULANCE *DROVE OFF* WITH THE BODY..."

"WE ALL *SAW* THEM GO... THE CORPSE WAS *DEFINITELY* ABOARD..."

"...BUT WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE *GOTHAM MORGUE*, THE WOMAN'S BODY WAS...*GONE!!*"

"THEY'D MADE *NO STOPS*, WHICH WAS CHECKED OUT--YET SOMEHOW, IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SEEMS, THE CORPSE HAD BEEN *STOLEN!*"

"WHICH LEAVES US WITH THE QUESTIONS--*HOW*... AND *WHY?*"

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

I'LL TAKE OVER FROM THERE, *BATMAN*. MY STORY'S *SIMILAR*... *FRIGHTENINGLY* SIMILAR!

"--BUT WHEN I PUNCHED THE *GALL-BUTTON* FOR AN ELEVATOR IN THE *LOBBY*--"

GOOD LORD!

THAT WOMAN'S ...*DEAD!*

I WAS ON *MY* WAY TO *MY* NEWSPAPER'S *EDITORIAL OFFICE* TO DELIVER TOMORROW'S COLUMN--

"LIKE DANTON, I CALLED THE COPS, AND WHEN THEY ARRIVED, WE WENT THROUGH THE WHOLE *ROUTINE*-- BUT THEN, AS THE AMBULANCE CREW WAS CARRYING OFF THE BODY--"

GOTHAM CITY NEWS AGENCY

WHA--?! THE WHOLE BUILDING'S GONE *DARK!*

WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?

"THERE WERE A FEW *SCREAMS* FROM THE CROWD--"

"--AND SUDDENLY, JUST LIKE THAT, THE LIGHTS CAME ON AGAIN!"

"MAYBE IT WAS A MOMENTARY *POWER-SHORTAGE* --AND *MAYBE* IT WAS THE *MURDERER!*"

"ANYWAY, HERE'S THE *SCREWY* PART--"

"--I, AND SCORES OF OTHER PEOPLE, WATCHED THAT AMBULANCE DRIVE OFF WITH THE BODY *INSIDE*--"

"--YET, WHEN THE AMBULANCE ARRIVED AT THE *MORGUE*-- YOU *GUESSED IT*--"

"THE BODY HAD *VANISHED!*"

"NOW I ASK, *BATMAN*--*HOW'D* IT HAPPEN? *WHY?*"

MAYBE I CAN ANSWER THAT, ART! I'VE BEEN *LISTENING* TO WHAT YOU AND JACK *SAID*--AND IT SEEMS WE'VE GOT A FEW *COMMON DENOMINATORS* HERE!

I WAS AT A *PREVIEW* OF A FILM MADE FROM ONE OF MY BOOKS--

"--A PERFECTLY *DREADFUL* ADAPTATION THEY CALLED '*MURDER ON THE NEWARK EXPRESS*!"

"I WAS ANGRY AT WHAT I'D SEEN -- BUT MY ANGER TURNED TO *SHOCK* AS THE LIGHTS CAME UP, AND I SAW--"

A CORPSE--*HERE*?!

IF THIS IS SOME PRESS-AGENT'S SICK IDEA OF A PUBLICITY STUNT--

"BUT IT WAS ALL *TOO REAL*! THE POLICE AND *AMBULANCE* WERE SUMMONED, AND WHILE THE BODY WAS BEING LOADED--"

"--THERE WAS A *DISTURBANCE*! THIS TIME, AN ELDERLY WOMAN HAVING AN APPARENT *HEART-ATTACK*!"

"DO YOU GENTLEMEN SEE A *PATTERN* DEVELOPING--?"

I NOTICED THE *PATTERN* WHEN DANTON TOLD *HIS* STORY, KAYE!

OBVIOUSLY, DURING THESE DISTURBANCES, THE *REAL* BODY WAS SWITCHED FOR A *FAKE* OF SOME KIND!

THAT'S WHY THE STRETCHER WAS ALREADY *ABOARD* THE AMBULANCE WHEN THE DISTURBANCE WAS *OVER*... SO THE ATTENDANTS WOULDN'T NOTICE IT WAS *TOO LIGHT* TO HOLD A *REAL BODY*!

KAYE... GENTLEMEN... IT'S TIME WE ADJOURNED TO THE *MORGUE*!

YES, THAT'S OUR *NEXT MOVE*--

--TO *FIND A CLUE*--

--TO A *MURDERER*!

CHAPTER TWO: "...WRAPPED IN A MYSTERY..."

10:08 P.M.--THE GOTHAM CITY MORGUE...

--MEAN TO STAND THERE AND TELL US YOU SAW *NOTHING*? A BODY IS SNATCHED RIGHT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSES-- AND YOU'RE ALL *BLIND*?

YOU *TELL* THEM, COMMISSIONER!

BELIEVE US, SIR, WE HAVEN'T HIDDEN ANYTHING! WHAT YOU *SEE* IS WHAT WE'VE *GOT*!

AND WHAT YOU HAVE IS A *GREAT DEAL*, MY FRIEND. COMMISSIONER, LOOK AT *THIS*--!

A WIRE *SUB-STRUCTURE SO THIN* IT'S ALMOST INVISIBLE...

...PROPPED UNDER THE SHEET TO MAKE IT *APPEAR* THERE WAS A BODY PRESENT!

IT *COLLAPSED* WHEN THE SHEET WAS *REMOVED*!

I'VE SEEN THAT SORT OF THING *BEFORE*-- BUT I CAN'T PLACE *WHERE*--

IN A MAGIC SHOW, KAYE-- SUCH AS THE SHOW CURRENTLY APPEARING AT THE *MAGIC PALACE* NIGHT CLUB!

NOW, IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* ME—WE'VE GOT SOME UNINVITED *COMPANY*-- SOMEONE I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO!

G.C.P.D. EXAMINATIO WARD C

THE WAY THIS FELLOW'S *TAKING* OFF--HE *MUST* HAVE SOMETHING TO *HIDE*!

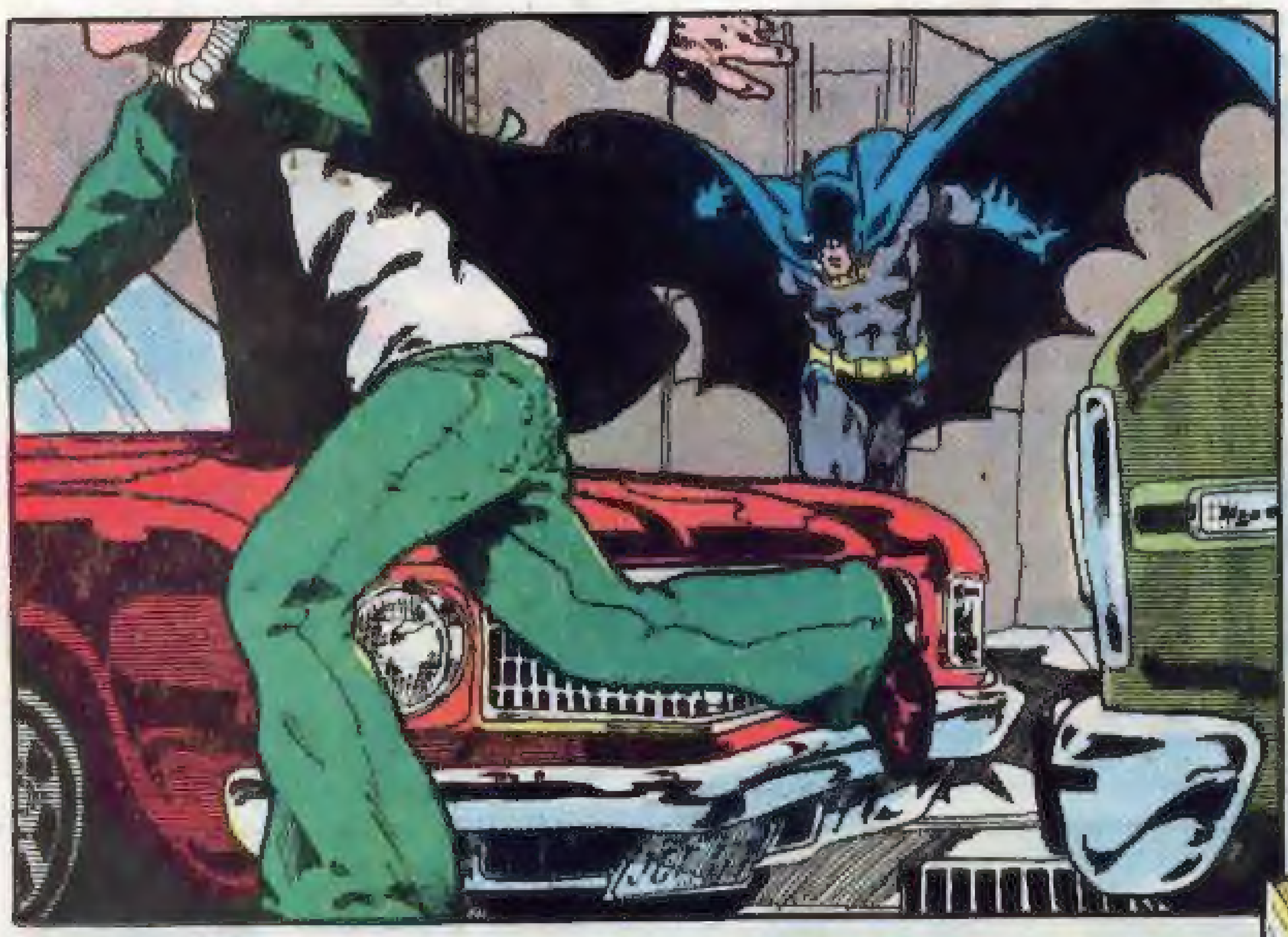
EXIT

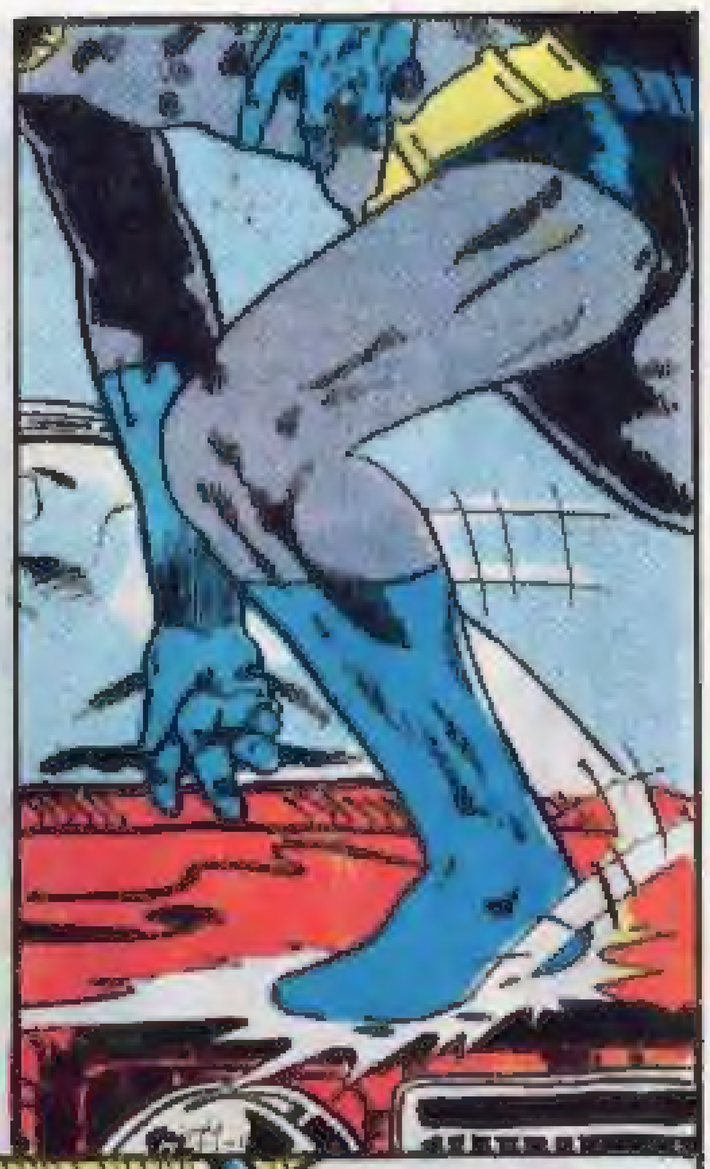
NORTH

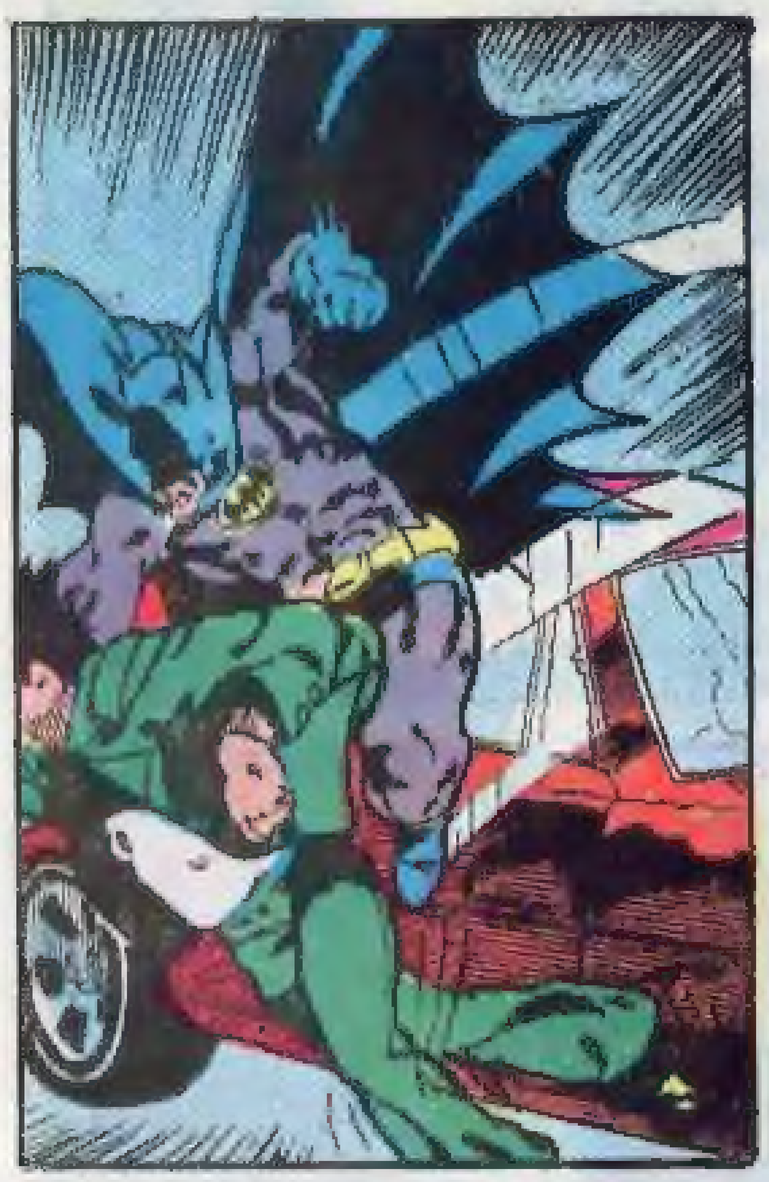
G.C.P.D.

MORGUE

WHOMP!







CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

ANY LUCK?

SERVICE ENTRANCE

PLENTY... ALL *BAD!*

HE TRICKED ME WITH AN AMATEUR STUNT I WASN'T *EXPECTING*...

...*FLASH-POWDER!*

THAT'S SOMETHING *MAGICIANS* USE--

--WHICH CLUES US INTO OUR *NEXT* MOVE--

--*THE MAGIC PALACE* ERECTED IN 1903 AS THE MANSION OF A MILLIONAIRE, THE PALACE WAS PURCHASED IN 1964 BY THE *SOCIETY OF SORCERERS* TO HOUSE THEIR PRIVATE *CLUB*...

TODAY, THE PALACE IS FAR *MORE* THAN A MERE CLUBHOUSE... IT PRESENTS A WIDE RANGE OF ACTS BY MAGICIANS BOTH AMATEUR AND *PROFESSIONAL*...

...AND IS KNOWN ACROSS THE WORLD AS ONE OF THE FOREMOST *NIGHTCLUBS* IN *GOTHAM CITY*.

THE MAGIC PALACE

YES, *BATMAN*-- THE GIRL YOU DESCRIBED *DOES* WORK HERE, THOUGH SHE AND HER EMPLOYER ARE *ABSENT* TONIGHT.

HER NAME IS *JUNE GOLD*-- ASSISTANT TO *DAVID HAMTON*...

...OUR HEADLINER THIS MONTH.

I SEE!

NOW TAKE US BACKSTAGE!

9

TELL ME, MR. BENNETT-- AS *MANAGER* OF THE PALACE, DID YOU NOTICE ANY -- AH--

--ANY *ILL WILL* BETWEEN MS. GOLD AND MR. HAMTON?

OMITTANCE

OH, MY, YES!

THEY WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROAT *CONSTANTLY!*

REALLY, NOW?

JUNE WANTED BIGGER BILLING-- AND WAS *INCESSANTLY* THREATENING TO REVEAL HIS SECRETS TO OTHER MAGICIANS!

THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN *DEATH* FOR HAMTON, YOU KNOW. SIMPLY *DEATH!*

IT MAY HAVE BEEN DEATH FOR *JUNE GOLD!*

EH?

MISTER BENNETT-- *DO* I GO ON, OR *DON'T* I? IF HAMTON DOESN'T SHOW UP SOON, WE'RE GOING TO *MISS* THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK *SHOW!*

NOW, NOW, MR. MONROE-- I'M *SURE* HE'LL ARRIVE ON TIME!

HE *MAY NOT*, BENNETT, *IF* HE'S A *MURDERER!*

WHAT--?!

QUICKLY, *THE BATMAN* REVEALS THE DISCOVERY OF THE VICTIM'S BODY...

THEN-- JUNE IS *DEAD*, AND YOU THINK DAVID'S HER *KILLER?*

HOW *HORRIBLE!*

BENNETT-- WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE--?

"THE YOUNG LADY IS *LISA MORROW*-- SHE ISN'T A MAGICIAN, REALLY-- SHE'S A *PSYCHIC*, A FRIEND OF *GLENN'S.*"

"*GLENN FALKENSTEIN* IS ONE OF THE TOP *MENTALISTS* IN THE BUSINESS. MIND-READING-- THAT SORT OF THING..."

"AND OF COURSE-- *MARTIN MONROE*, ONE OF OUR *JUNIOR* MAGICIANS-- AN APPRENTICE OF MR. HAMTON..."

TELL ME -- WHICH ONE OF *YOU* WOULD HAVE REASON TO *KILL JUNE GOLD?*

WHY, YOU-- *VIGILANTE!*

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU *ARE*, ASKING A QUESTION LIKE THAT?

HE'S AN HONORARY *POLICE DEPUTY*, MR. MONROE-- AND I AM THE *POLICE!*

YEAH- RIGHT!...

...DON'T KNOW WHY I'M *ANGRY*... I'VE GOT AN *ALIBI* FOR ALL EVENING...

ASSUMING JUNE WAS KILLED *TONIGHT!*

YOU HAVE? WHAT *SORT* OF ALIBI?

CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

I CAN ANSWER THAT, COMMISSIONER!

I SAW HIM IN THE BARROOM ALL EVENING, SITTING BY HIMSELF IN A *CORNER* ...

IT SEEMED *ODD* AT THE TIME... BUT I GUESS IT ACCOUNTS FOR HIS *WHEREABOUTS!*

BESIDES, IF YOU WANT A *MOTIVE* FOR JUNE'S *MURDER* --ASK *LISA* OR *GLENN!*

JUNE WAS ALWAYS COMING IN HERE *DRUNK*--INSULTING LISA--AND THREATENING TO BOTCH UP GLENN'S *ACT*...

THAT'S *TRUE*-- BUT I'D *NEVER* THINK OF *HARMING* THE GIRL!

AND WHAT ABOUT *HAMTON*, COMMISSIONER?

HE *HATED* THE GIRL--ONLY KEPT HER ON BECAUSE SHE WAS *BLACKMAILING* HIM!

THINK IT OVER..

.. I MUST GO NOW - I HAVE THINGS TO DO!

HAMTON *IS* OUR PRIME SUSPECT, BUT WE STILL DON'T-- EH?

EXCUSE ME, COMMISSIONER!

I'VE SOMETHING SPECIAL TO *ATTEND* TO--

--ALONE!

KAYE'S GONE! SHE PROBABLY *SAW* SOMEONE-- MY GUESS IS HAMTON--AND WENT TO *FOLLOW* HIM!

I DON'T WANT TO SCARE HIM OFF BY HAVING A PACK OF *MYSTERY ANALYSTS* CHARGING THROUGH THESE CORRIDORS LIKE HOUNDS IN FULL CRY!

MINUTES CRAWL BY--AND THEN, AS THE *CAPED CRUSADER* ENTERS A *PITCH-BLACK* ROOM ...

CRACK

SOMEONE *MOVING AROUND* IN HERE--

UNHHHH!

CHAPTER THREE: "... INSIDE AN ENIGMA..."

10:48 P.M.--FIRST HE FEELS THE *COLD* AND THEN, AS CONSCIOUSNESS SLOWLY RETURNS, HE FEELS THE *WATER*...

GOOD EVENING, BATMAN! FOR YEARS, I'VE BEEN AN *ADMIRER* OF YOURS--THE WAY YOU ESCAPED ALL THOSE *DEATHTRAPS*, LIKE SOME MODERN-DAY *HOUDINI*--

REALLY, IT WAS QUITE *INSPIRING!*

PITY ISN'T IT, THAT YOU HAD TO *INTERFERE* WITH MY LITTLE *MURDER!* NOW YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY YOUR HAND AT A *REAL* DEATHTRAP...

...ONE YOU *CANNOT POSSIBLY ESCAPE!*

"PERHAPS YOU *RECOGNIZE* THE PARAPHERNALIA ALL PART OF HOUDINI'S FAMOUS *WATER-ESCAPE*--ONE OF THE MOST *INGENIOUS* HE EVER DEVISED!"

"UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, I'VE *ALTERED* THE EQUIPMENT SOMEWHAT!"

"*NOW, UNLIKE* HOUDINI, YOU HAVE NO MINIATURE PICKLOCK TO REMOVE YOUR HANDCUFFS --AND THERE, AS SHAKESPEARE *WOULD* HAVE IT--"

- IS THE *RUB!*

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE TIME TO ESCAPE THE CUFFS BEFORE YOU *DROWN!*

I'D LOVE TO STAY AND *WATCH* YOUR DEMISE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S NO *TIME!*

I HAVE A *PERFORMANCE* TO GIVE, YOU SEE-- *"THE SHOW MUST GO ON!"*

BUT DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE BACK *LATER*, TO DISPOSE OF *MISS DAYE*

AND I'LL SEE YOU *THEN*--THOUGH *YOU* WON'T SEE ME!

DEAD MEN CAN'T SEE, YOU KNOW! HA HA HA

I *DO* HAVE A *PICKLOCK*--IN MY *UTILITY BELT!*

BUT I CAN'T *REACH* IT IN THIS POSITION!

IF I WERE *HOUDINI*, I'D BE A *DEAD MAN*--

--BUT ONLY BECAUSE HOUDINI PRACTICED HIS ESCAPE-ARTS FOR *ENTERTAINMENT*--

--WHILE *MY* TRAINING WAS IN METHODS OF *SURVIVAL!*

THAT MEANS I'LL HAVE TO *FORGET* THE CUFFS--

--AND CONCENTRATE ON THE *BIG* PROBLEM--

--THE *TANK* ITSELF!

IF I CAN JUST--GET ENOUGH *PUSH*--

--MORE--

--MUCH MORE...

K-K-K-K-K-K-K-K-K

SPRASSHH

FIRST GULP IN SOME *AIR*--

--THEN MANEUVER MY HANDS IN POSITION--

--TO REMOVE PICKLOCK FROM MY BELT--

KLUNK

--OPEN!

SORRY FOR THE SOAKING, KAYE!

THINK NOTHING OF IT, BATMAN--IT COOLED OFF MY HOT ANGER!

NOW-- GET THAT KILLER!

--THE SHOW IS OVER!

MARTIN MONROE-- YOU'RE UNDER ARREST-- FOR MURDER ONE!

B-BATMAN--?! IMPOSSIBLE!

AND AS YOU SEE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--

NO MORE IMPOSSIBLE THAN YOUR ALIBI!

YOU KILLED JUNE GOLD-- AND TRIED TO KILL ME! YOU'RE A MASTER OF ILLUSION--

--BUT RIGHT NOW, WE'RE DEALING WITH REALITIES--

KRAK!

--SUCH AS THIS!

YOU WANT *REALITY*, DETECTIVE?

HOW ABOUT THE REALITY OF A DEVOTED *APPRENTICE*--

--DOOMED TO WASTE *YEARS* PLAYING ASSISTANT BEFORE BEING ALLOWED AN ACT OF *MY OWN*!

WHEN HAMTON WAS INDISPOSED, I PERFORMED *HIS* ACT--I TOOK *HIS* PLACE--

--BUT DID HE EVER GIVE ME AN *OPPORTUNITY* TO SHOW *MY OWN* STUFF?

NO!

SO I HAD TO MAKE MY OWN OPPORTUNITY--

--BY STARRING--*SOLO*--AT THE *MAGIC PALACE*!

THAT MEANT I HAD TO *CANCEL OUT* HAMTON BY KILLING JUNE GOLD--

--AND GETTING HAMTON *ACCUSED* OF HER *MURDER*!

AND HE WOULD HAVE BEEN--UNTIL YOU AND YOUR *MYSTERY ANALYSTS* *RUINED* MY SCHEME!

UHHHHH

WE DIDN'T RUIN IT--*HAMTON* DID!

CHUNK

FLAK

FLAK

FLAK

FLAK

LIAR! HAMTON'S AN EGOTISTICAL *FOOL*!

AND *YOU*--YOU'RE A *DEAD MAN*!

YOU'RE GOING TO *BURN*!

FWOOSH

MONROE'S *CRACKED*--WITH TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE TO KILL!

GOT TO KEEP UP A *TALKING FIGHT*--*DISARM* HIM!

HAMTON WAS BEHIND THE BODY SHUFFLING...

--KNOWING IT WOULD BRING THE GIRL'S MURDER TO THE ATTENTION OF GOTHAM'S FINEST CRIME-SOLVERS!

EHH--?

WHAT SHUFFLING?

OF COURSE-- YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT!

HE WANTED US TO BE INVOLVED--TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE!

ONCE I REALIZED THAT, I LOOKED FOR SOMEONE WHO WAS OUT TO GET HAMTON--

--NOT JUNE GOLD!

KAYE DAYE FIGURED IT THE SAME-- AND WENT TO DO SOME PRIVATE SNOOPING!

YOU LEFT US WHEN YOU SAW SHE WAS MISSING--

--BECAUSE YOU FEARED SHE'D FIND YOU OUT! YOU'D JUST CAUGHT UP--AND SLUGGED HER-- WHEN I SHOWED UP!

B-BATMAN... H-HELP--!!

--THE GUILLOTINE BLADE--

WHOOOOSH

CHUNK

EXIT

FACE UP TO IT, MONROE...

CONCLUDED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

..YOU'RE NOT ONLY A LOUSY MAGICIAN-- BUT A *BAD KILLER*, TOO!

YOU *COULD* HAVE KILLED ME...AND KAYE--IF YOU WEREN'T *IN SUCH* A HURRY TO LEAVE AND DO YOUR ACT!

EPILOGUE: 11:30 P.M.-- A FEW LAST LOOSE STRINGS...

I WAS IN THE AUDIENCE WHEN YOU CAPTURED MONROE, *BATMAN!* FOR A WHILE THERE, I WASN'T SURE YOU'D *DEDUCE* WHAT I WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU...

YOU MEAN WHEN YOU FOUGHT ME AT THE *MORGUE?*

I RECOGNIZED YOU FROM YOUR *PUBLICITY POSTERS*, HAMTON, EVEN IN THE DARK--

--BUT I *WONDERED* WHY YOU'D *RESIST* ME IF YOU WERE *INNOCENT* -- AND WHY YOU DIDN'T *KILL* ME WHEN I WAS BLINDED--IF YOU WERE *GUILTY* OF *MURDER!*

IT ADDED UP TO AN *INNOCENT* MAN TRYING TO CLEAR HIMSELF!

I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D "*WONDER*"! MY HOPE *PAID OFF!*

SPEAKING OF *PAYOFFS* --

--YOU *PAID* THOSE PEOPLE TO CREATE A DISTURBANCE-- TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO *SWITCH BODIES!*

THAT'S *RIGHT*, MS. DAYE--

--MAGICIAN'S *MISDIRECTION*-- LIKE MONROE'S "*ALIBI*"!

WINSTON SAID IT WAS *ODD* TO FIND MONROE IN A BARROOM--

YES, I QUESTIONED WINSTON LATER, AND FOUND OUT THAT MONROE *DIDN'T DRINK!*

WHY ELSE *WOULD* HE MAKE IT SO OBVIOUS HE WAS IN THE BAR--UNLESS HE *WASN'T* THERE--

--TO CREATE AN *ALIBI* BY USING SOME MAGICIAN'S *ILLUSION!*

BUT, *BATMAN*... HOW *DID* HE CREATE THAT ILLUSION?

ASK *MONROE*, KAYE—BUT I DOUBT HE'LL TELL *YOU!*

MAGICIAN'S *DON'T* REVEAL THEIR SECRETS--EVEN IN *PRISON*-- WHERE THEY CAN *NEVER* USE THEM AGAIN!

THE END

11:45 P.M.-- FOR MARTIN MONROE, THE LAST PERFORMANCE IS *OVER!*

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE THE SECOND WEEK IN NOVEMBER!

#ocd on newnet
http://ocd.conforums.com